



Louis H. Bruni
County Judge

1000 Houston St. 3rd Floor
Laredo, Texas 78040

(956) 523-4600
Fax (956) 523-5065

WEBB COUNTY PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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WEBB COUNTY RURAL RAIL DISTRICT BOARD MEETING

The first organizational meeting of the Webb County Rural Rail District Board was held on April 1st, 2003, at the Webb County Court House. The single county rail district was created with a resolution from the Webb County Commissioner's Court during their regular meeting on February 10th, 2003. During the organizational meeting officers were elected as follows: **Carlos Villarreal**, President, **Fernando Laurel**, Vice-President, (subject to being sworn) and **Arturo Dominguez**, Treasurer. A total of five board members will serve the rail district board. Other Board Members are **Ramiro Barrera, III** and **Javier Gonzalez**. Community Rail Development Corporation, out of Granbury, Texas has served as the rail district consultants over the last few months and will be working with the rail district board over the next year.

Rail district legislation was approved in Texas in 1981. To date there are 25 rail districts in the state of Texas consisting of over 65 counties. Rail districts are non-taxing entities created by the county commissioner courts of the participating counties. Rail districts have been used to block rail abandonment's, acquire existing rail lines and build new rail infrastructure. Rail districts generate revenues by the issuance of tax free, tax exempt revenue bonds, grants, loans or usage fees from rail operators. The strength and ability of a rail district in Webb County was readily appreciated by Judge Louis H. Bruni and Webb County Commissioners, as they considered the effect that a rail district had in Bexar County.

A single county rail district was approved by the Bexar County Commissioners Court in December to assist with the recruitment of the Toyota Manufacturing facility to San Antonio. Rail issues almost prevented Toyota from locating in San Antonio, but approval of the rail district helped seal the deal with Toyota. Mr. Dennis Cueno, Toyota Executive, stated at a San Antonio press conference that "the creation of the Bexar County Rail District was critical" "if it were not for the rail district, we probably would not come here otherwise". Community Rail Development Corporation played a leading role with the development of the Bexar County Rail District.

John Helsley, President of CRDC is excited about the rail opportunities in Webb County. "Rail districts are a key to rail economic development opportunities. We are currently working with several shippers on some trade issues that will impact the Webb County area," stated Helsley. "We appreciate the vision and wisdom of the county court in creating the rail district.....Judge Bruni and the court showed a great deal of leadership during the process," Helsley said.